

- Soybean planting will follow the corn planting.
- Wheat harvest is but a few weeks away in Kansas, with days during my visit at 100 degrees Fahrenheit (~38 C) wheat will mature quickly. However, in the drive across the state, the dry winter was evident in that the “amber waves of grain” weren’t as full of promise as in years past. Having said that, wheat can surprise as a bit of rain at the right time.

Switching back to North Carolina.

- Three “farm” visits were made during the Farm Managers and Rural Appraisers tour in mid-June. The first was a potato farm, the second an oyster “farm” and the third an “aquatic research farm”.
- The potato farm was in harvest mode for the chipping potato (potato crisps). This farm grew potatoes in North Carolina as one of three locations: Illinois and Michigan being the other two states. The farm operator was 5th generation with his son being 6th generation to come on board. The potatoes were mechanically harvested, washed, scrubbed/brushed, weighed out and loaded loosely on a box semi-trailer for delivery to clients. The farm has contracts with all the major potato chip producers; Frito-Lay, Wise, UTZ and others. From field truck delivery to loaded semi-trailer with the semi departing for delivery took 15 minutes. The farmer reported that the yield of potatoes in North Carolina is less than in Michigan, but, it fills a void in potato delivery to maintain flow of product for the chip makers, thus it fits in the business model. Yields were in a range of 25,000 – 28,000 lbs. per acre (28 – 31.6 metric tonnes per hectare).
- The second farm stop was to an oyster “farm” which was in its 5 year of production. The farm leases 10 acres of “bottom and water column” from the state of North Carolina along the Pamlico River. The lease rate is \$1,000 (US) per year, \$100 per acre. The “water men” were required to improve the “farm” with GPS marked locations of the corners of the leased area, posts for securing the cages. The farm buys ~ 2 million “seeds” has an expectation to lose 50% and sells a bit over 1 million oysters per year at an average price of \$0.40 per oyster. Before harvest, each oyster is handled 12 – 14 times and dependent upon season and vitality of the seed the oyster can be salable size in 18 – 24 months. This operation is in the process of expanding and being at a point to bring on more labor to assist and secure the expansion.
- The last stop on the summer tour this year was a research station where “domesticated” white bass and “domesticated” striped bass are being raised for production. The hybrid between these two species seems to have potential if the “domesticated” versions are utilized for the genetic improvements made. However, some of the fishermen use “domesticated” males over wild caught females with limited success as the cross isn’t of real benefit as research shows that the offspring are “back to square one”. Perhaps a case of a “penny wise and a pound foolish”. Sales of the striped bass at the 4-5 lb. (~2 kilo) range are the target. The industry is working with regulators to allow for the expansion of market opportunities.
- As I wrap up this report, the sky is heavily overcast and temperatures are quite cool for mid-June in Raleigh, North Carolina. Both in North Carolina and Kansas, issues of international trade and any forthcoming changes are on farmer’s minds going into the summer.

I wish readers a very pleasant several months until we meet in Tasmania for IFMA22.